




# MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 16, 2021  
TO: Planning Commission  
FROM: Ken Johnson, Senior Planner   
SUBJECT: **Workshop - 2023-2030 Housing Element Update**  
**Demographics, Housing Needs and the Balancing Act Tool**

Tonight's Housing Element workshop is to provide a summary of the demographic trends in Brisbane and how that relates to the need for affordable housing and to introduce the new online Balancing Act community engagement tool for input on housing sites. Additionally, this memorandum provides some background information links to help set the stage for the live meeting and subsequent meetings planned for the first several months of 2022.

In general, the Housing Element will need to include the following major components:

1. Housing Needs Assessment
2. Evaluation of Housing Element Past Performance.
3. Housing Sites Inventory, sufficient to meet the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)
4. Housing Constraints Analysis
5. Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

This workshop will be a starting point in our discussion of the housing needs assessment (demographic trends and affordability) and sites inventory. We will examine all of these topics in more depth in early 2022. Note that the schedule for Housing Element adoption will be intensive for the Planning Commission during the first 6 months of 2022, in order to meet the state's statutory deadline. Further discussion on the schedule is provided below.

## **Housing Needs - Demographic Trends and Housing Affordability**

The City engaged the consulting firm ECONorthwest earlier this year to prepare an Affordable Housing Strategic Plan. That work is ongoing and includes the tasks of developing affordable housing strategies specific to the Baylands and citywide. The work program involves identifying the city's affordable housing goals and priorities, suggesting programs and policies to achieve them, and identifying potential revenue streams for affordable housing. Their work directly relates to the ongoing Housing Element update. Their knowledge of local demographic trends and affordable housing needs provides valuable context for the upcoming Housing Element update and they will be making a presentation to the Planning Commission this evening.

## **Balancing Act and Meeting the RHNA**

The City has a state mandated requirement to allow zoning for a certain number of housing units within this next housing element cycle, for the years 2023 to 2031. As was discussed during the Planning

Commission’s March 25<sup>th</sup> study session, ABAG has assigned a Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) to Brisbane that is much higher than seen in past housing element cycles. It is shown below:

**Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)  
 Housing Units by Income Categories**

	Very Low	Low	Moderate	Above Moderate (Market Rate)	Totals
<b>Years 2023-2031 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>1,588</b>

Per HCD, the corresponding income limits for each category, within San Mateo County, are provided below. These income categories correlate to the RHNA table.

**Income Limits: San Mateo County**

<b>Income Category</b>	<b>Percent of median income</b>	<b>Annual income (1-person household)</b>	<b>Annual income (3-person household)</b>	<b>Annual income (4-person household)</b>
Extremely low-income	30%	\$38,400	\$49,350	\$54,800
Very low-income	50%	\$63,950	\$82,250	\$91,350
Low income	80%	\$102,450	\$131,750	\$146,350
<b>Median income</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$104,700</b>	<b>\$134,650</b>	<b>\$149,600</b>
Moderate income	120%	\$125,650	\$161,550	\$179,500

While Brisbane’s total RHNA for this cycle is 1,588 units, the Regional Housing Needs Determination from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to the nine county Bay Area region was 441,176; so the Bay Area as a whole is needing to prepare for significant growth in the coming years.

This fall, through the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), Brisbane was awarded a license to utilize an online community engagement tool, Balancing Act, to gather input on potential housing sites from the community. This tool, customized to Brisbane, as “Balance Brisbane”, allows individuals to select from a menu of potential housing sites, or areas, and set the number of housing units that might be developed in each area, in order to meet the minimum required for housing element compliance. While the tool is much like an online planning game, it is intended to provide invaluable, real-world feedback from the community to help inform future Planning Commission and City Council deliberations on this challenging topic. Balance Brisbane may be considered essentially a community brainstorming session. As is typical with brainstorming sessions, there are no wrong answers and the more participation the better. With that in mind, there are opportunities for participants to provide notes throughout the program inputs.

It should be noted, it is not anticipated that all of the sites would ultimately be identified as sites for rezoning. The hope is that participants will not to simply pick the minimum number of sites/units and submit, but rather to pick any sites and densities that they think would be reasonable and good for the future of Brisbane. The sites and density mix to be provided in the Housing Element would ultimately be a decision of City Council, following further public participation and Planning Commission

recommendation to Council. Also, note that, many of the sites included in Balancing Act are those where housing is not currently permitted by the zoning or by the General Plan/Housing Element, but they were identified as being potentially viable and worthy of discussion. For completeness, areas, such as Central Brisbane, that already allow for housing were included, but these infill sites would only make up a small fraction of what's needed.

For Brisbane's Balancing Act users to complete and submit their opinions on where and how much housing should be planned, they would need to identify the housing sites at an adequate number of units to meet the RHNA of 1,588 plus a 20% margin, for 1,906 units total. Note that ABAG recommends a 15% to 30% margin in each jurisdiction's housing element, to ensure compliance with no net loss law (Govt Code Section 65863). This law is to ensure that assumptions jurisdictions make in their housing elements match what is actually built. This is further explained in the [Technical Assistance for Local Planning Fact Sheet](#), which is also provided as an informational link through Balancing Act. Also, note that, given the nuanced nature of getting RHNA credit for very low to moderate income housing, these units are not specifically identified in the Balancing Act program. They are subsets of the total and will be the subject of further study in early 2022.

During the workshop at the Planning Commission, staff will provide a Balancing Act demonstration to further explain the program. The tool has been advertised City-wide through various City media channels as well as mailed fliers that were sent to multi-family residential unit, mobile home unit and accessory dwelling unit residents, in an effort to reach what may be characterized as typically lower income or potentially underserved populations in Brisbane.

The Balancing Act program went live online at [2023-2031 Housing Element Update | City of Brisbane \(brisbaneca.org\)](#) on December 8<sup>th</sup> and is planned to remain available online through January 14, 2022, at which time staff will compile the response data and provide it to the Commission.

### **Additional Information & Resources**

As the Commission prepares for this workshop and additional Housing Element workshops to follow in early 2022, there are a number of resources, in video and written form, that we encourage you to review, if you have not already participated in or viewed. These are all provided via links from the City's webpage: [2023-2031 Housing Element Update | City of Brisbane \(brisbaneca.org\)](#)

#### Workshops and Study Sessions

- Planning Commission Housing Element Kick-off workshop, March 28
- Through our membership in 21 Elements, six presentation/workshops were provided to the larger San Mateo County Community. Each were approximately 1 hour long and can be view from the link provided above.
  - “Let's Talk Housing Countywide Community Meeting”, April 13
  - “Let's Talk Housing: All About RHNA” April 22
  - “Why Affordability Matters”, October 13
  - “Housing and Racial Equity”, October 27
  - “Housing in a Climate of Change”, November 10
  - “Putting it All Together for a Better Future”, December 1

## Reference Materials

HCD's and ABAG's websites provide a number of written reference materials. A few that are recommended for review at this time are provided below. Additionally, a link to the current Housing Element is provided.

- RHNA Process: For information on the RHNA process, please see the Final Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Plan: San Francisco Bay Area, 2023-2031 at: [proposed Final RHNA Allocation Report 2023-2031.pdf](#)
- Site Inventory Guidebook (Govt Code Section 65583.2): This HCD memo provides details on the state's rules on how jurisdictions are to select and report suitable housing sites in their housing elements. [Housing Element Sites Inventory Guidebook \(ca.gov\)](#)
- Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) (Govt Code Section 65583.2(c)(10)): While inclusion of underserved and populations that have been discriminated against in housing elements has always been important in order to develop fair and balanced housing opportunities, recent state legislation has taken additional steps to help ensure it happens with this cycle. The state defines AFFH as, *"taking meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and fosters inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected characteristics...transforming racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity..."* Please see the following ABAG webpage for more information: [Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing \(ca.gov\)](#)
- 2015-2022 Housing Element: The current housing element is available on the City's webpage, as Chapter XI: <https://www.brisbaneca.org/cd/page/general-plan>

## **Schedule and Next Steps:**

Housing Element updates are due to HCD by January 31, 2023. While that's over a year from now, the schedule for workshops and public hearings in advance of that is intensive. Before outlining the Commission's next steps, note that Govt Code Section 65585 prescribes the following steps jurisdictions are to take in adopting a housing element:

1. Submit a draft element to HCD prior to adoption
2. Consider HCD's findings prior to adoption
3. Revise and adopt the element to comply with the statute or adopt the draft without changes and specify in the resolution the findings that explain the reasons the housing element complies with the statute; and
4. Promptly submit the adopted element to HCD

The local jurisdictions are required to adopt the housing element within 120 days of the January 31, 2021 statutory due date, but given the steps outlined above, a draft would need to be reviewed by Council and submitted for HCD review well in advance of that date.

The state recently passed Assembly Bill AB 215, which expanded HCD's review time on the first submittal of the draft from 60 to 90 days, with 60 days for subsequent reviews on responses to

comments. It also adds a requirement of a minimum 30-day public review period, plus time to address any comments.

Given the process for adoption by the City and HCD certification, the following schedule is planned for 2022:

- Now through March: Planning Commission workshops, monthly to twice monthly. The next is planned for January 27th
- April: Complete Draft Housing Element available for at least 30 days for public comment and Commission review in advance of the first Public Hearing
- May: Public hearings (2 anticipated) at the Planning Commission.
- June – July: Public hearings (2 anticipated) at City Council.
- Late July: Submit draft Housing Element to HCD for review and comment (90 days)
- Late October: Receive HCD comments
- November - December: Public hearing at City Council, or Planning Commission if necessary, to address HCD comments and adopt the Housing Element
- December: Resubmittal to HCD for review/certification.